

Helen Witty joined MADD in 2001, less than a year after her 16-year-old daughter, Helen Marie, was killed by a drunk and drugged teen driver while rollerblading on a designated bike path near the family's Miami home.

Shattered by the sudden, violent loss, Helen found hope through MADD, which soon gave her a platform to help others who had suffered similar tragedies – and to work toward a future of No More Victims.

Before becoming National President in 2019, Helen spent 11 years as a MADD volunteer victim advocate, helping survivors and victims navigate through often long and painful court proceedings and returning the comfort she'd found in the darkest days of her grief. In addition, she spent seven years as a staff member facilitating MADD's prevention programs in South Florida and trained in MADD's National Death Notification curriculum, which she presented to law enforcement agencies throughout the state.

Helen believes it is stories like hers and others that hold the power to create change. To that end, she spent years sharing the tragic loss of Helen Marie, her only daughter, with school children, parents, police officers, federal agents and hospital workers. She delivered MADD's message in classrooms, churches, airports, seaports and to local and national television audiences.

Helen lobbied legislators in Miami and Tallahassee for tougher drunk driving laws, including Florida's Aaron Cohen Life Protection Act that imposes the same sentence for drivers who flee the scene of a fatal crash as DUI manslaughter offenders. Named for a Miami cyclist killed in 2012 by a hit-and-run driver, the bill was signed into law in 2014.

As MADD's national spokesperson, Helen speaks to lawmakers around the nation about the importance of requiring ignition interlocks for all offenders, a cornerstone of MADD's Campaign to Eliminate Drunk Driving®. She advocates for high-visibility law enforcement, such as sobriety checkpoints that can reduce drunk driving deaths by 17 percent. She champions personal accountability and advanced vehicle technology, including autonomous cars.

Helen also urges parents to talk to their teens about not drinking alcohol until 21, having experienced the devastating consequences firsthand. She continues to share Helen Marie's story, adding her voice to the courageous ones that came before, and to draw close to those so deeply impacted by impaired driving. She believes it is what her daughter would have wanted.

In addition to her work with MADD, Helen spent nine years as a Delta Air Lines employee and worked for eight years as a college advisor in Miami-Dade Public Schools. She graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Sweetbriar College in Virginia with degrees in Spanish and German.

A native of Miami, she lives in the childhood home her father built, with her beloved husband, John. They have a surviving son, John, who resides in New York, where he is working on a Ph.D. in art history and serving as a curatorial fellow for The Frick Collection, a premier museum and research center.